

have an obligation to build schools in this country and to make those facilities available for our children like our parents did for us, because, Mr. Speaker, nearly one in every three schools in America today was built before World War II.

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That is just not right, and we can do better and we must do better for the children of this country.

Let us talk about safer classrooms. Drug use among our 12th graders, over half of whom have already tried drugs, is up. Only 30 percent of public elementary schools in this country have after-school programs and in rural areas, such as where I am from in Texas, the number drops to 12 percent. The Federal Government should continue to make grants available to work in partnership with local government and communities for prevention, for early intervention and enforcement efforts.

Further, we should authorize funding for school-based partnerships between local law enforcement agencies and school districts to combat crime, to combat drug activities and to make sure that our children have a safe place to learn.

Finally, better technology. Give our kids the skills they are going to need for the jobs that are coming up in the next century. We need to ensure that our children have the necessary technology in the classroom. That means modern computers, Internet connections, educational software, educated, well-paid, enthused, encouraged teachers that are ready, willing and able to teach our children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOLOMON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CHANGE IN ORDER OF TAKING SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to substitute for the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

HMO REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the tone that we heard from the gentleman from Connecticut.

I am a physician. I still practice. What we were supposed to have received from Mr. GEJDENSON was that the problems in the health care field today have come about because of this Congress. They have come about because of a law called ERISA that this Congress a number of years ago passed. And the thing that strikes me rather peculiarly is what we hear as HMO attacks instead of attacks on physicians who are not doing their job.

The number one job of a physician is to do no harm. I want to tell my colleagues, if I do an outpatient surgery, which I do almost every weekend, and my patient is not ready to go home, I fight and fight and fight, but I do not give up. My patient stays there until they are ready to go home. Do you know what? I win those battles with HMOs. I do not lose those battles. What we are really hearing is the inability of physicians to have backbone to stand up.

The law that created the situation that we have today was created several years ago, not by a conservative Republican Congress, but by a rather liberal Democrat Congress. I do not usually say anything partisan on this floor, but the tone of the speech is inappropriate for this august body. To not challenge that tone will do more to destroy this institution than anything I know. We passed a bill, it is called the Patient Protection Act. It is not designed to put more lawyers at work and increase health insurance costs by lining the pockets of people who are going to challenge HMOs through the court system. There is no question we have to make changes. Those changes are being made. They have been made with this Congress. But the very idea that this Congress, this Republican Congress, is responsible for the emotional diatribe that we just heard is anything but the truth.

The truth is, we have tremendous cost pressures on health care in this country. HMOs have done a lot to help us solve those problems. Are they perfect? No. Have they made mistakes? No. Is there any physician before HMOs were created that has not made a similar mistake of letting someone go home too soon? No. So we can emotionalize these issues. We can try to make them a campaign issue, but what we do is serious damage to the real problems that we have to solve in this country.

And my heart is broken that we have the kind of discourse that we have in this House that creates a false paper tiger and then sets it down. To the American public, I apologize for what we heard in the past 30 minutes from the gentleman from Connecticut. It is my hope that we can carry on conversations in this House that come up to the level of integrity, honesty and maturity that this House deserves.

CHANGE IN ORDER OF TAKING SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to substitute for the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Hawaii?

There was no objection.

ON THE EDUCATION AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a very unusual occasion that we are experiencing today, that this House would be engaged in discussing important issues on a Sunday. It is even more unusual because we had expected to adjourn on October 9, Friday. We were given a calendar that so indicated.

The reason that we are all here on a Sunday and expect to even be meeting on a Federal holiday tomorrow is that the Republican-controlled Congress has not been able to work out its own differences with respect to very, very important bills, particularly those that the Constitution requires that we pass before we go home having to do the funding of government.

I rise today to pay special attention to the items that I am concerned with on the education agenda. I came to the Congress initially in 1965 because I was deeply concerned about the future of education at that point. Ever since then in the 20 years that I have served in Congress, I have spent almost the entire time by serving on the education committee. I also serve on budget. I asked to be assigned to budget because I felt that so many of the issues that related to education were dependent upon funding. So some years ago I sought a seat on the Committee on the Budget and I was so honored to serve. We worked very hard. We produced our budget resolution and for the first time since the budget process was enacted in the early 1970s, this is the first time that the Congress has not voted on a budget resolution.

So something is happening within the Republican majority that has caused us to be here today on a Sunday and not to be able to finish on time. One of the major bills that we have not been able to pass is the Labor, HHS, Education appropriations bill. It never came out of our House Committee on Appropriations and it is still locked in tremendous disagreement within the Republican conference, as well as with the Senate and with the administration and with House Democrats.

Earlier there were comments about the President's schedule and how he was not attending to the business at hand. I would like to say that this Congress has a record of only being in session 106 days this entire year up to Friday, October 9. This is a record of